DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 350 748 EC 301 555

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TITLE Transition from School to Adulthood for Young People with Disabilities.
INSTITUTION Virginia Commonwealth Univ., Richmond. Rehabilitation Research and Training Center.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (ED/OSERS), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 92
CONTRACT H-133B80052-92; H158N00051-91
NOTE 9p.
AVAILABLE FROM Virginia Commonwealth University, Rehabilitation, Research and Training Center, Box 2011, 1314 W. Main St., Richmond, VA 23284-2011 (free).
PUB TYPE Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
JOURNAL CIT RRTC; Sum 1992

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Career Development; Case Studies; Compliance (Legal); *Disabilities; *Education Work Relationship; High Schools; Job Placement; Job Training; *Labor Legislation; School Community Relationship; Training Methods; *Transitional Programs; Vocational Adjustment; Vocational Education; *Vocational Rehabilitation; *Work Study Programs; Young Adults
IDENTIFIERS *Community Based Education

ABSTRACT

This newsletter issue provides rehabilitation professionals with various information pieces concerning transition from school to adulthood for young people with disabilities. An introduction identifies specific challenges in transition programming and stresses the goal of fully integrating young people with disabilities as interdependent parts of the community. One brief item describes the Vocational Options project of the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Supported Employment (Virginia). Another summarizes criteria of a "non-employment" relationship under labor laws as related to community-based instruction. Case study examples of labor law issues are cited. Another item outlines steps and activities in setting up community-based training sites. A case study shows use of a changing criterion design to improve job performance of a young man with severe mental retardation and autism. Another example describes experiences of a young woman at three different community-based vocational training sites and associated placement and training recommendations. (DB)

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Summer, 1992

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RRTC

"Improving Supported Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Developmental and Other Severe Disabilities"

REHABILITATION RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTER AT VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

Transition From School To Adulthood For Young People With Disabilities

A JOINT Publication from the Vocational Options Project and the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Supported Employment

Relatively few initiatives can sustain themselves in human services for more than 3-5 years. The energy level, interest, and enthusiasm associated with different innovations must draw energy from people in many disciplines and meet a legitimate unmet need. Transition from school to adulthood for young people with disabilities is, perhaps, one of the more enduring initiatives that has occurred over the past decade.

Has progress been made? **Absolutely!** Have all of the obstacles and challenges for implementing meaningful transition been overcome? Absolutely not! Unfortunately, there is a list of issues, problems, concerns, and areas for which concentrated effort must be expended. What are these problems? What challenges lie ahead to make transition to adulthood effective? Here is my "laundry list" which I offer for thought, consideration, and review.

1) We need to recognize that parents are not fully "on board" with transition. They have always been the driving force behind change for children with disabilities. Our efforts in this regard need to be doubled and redoubled.

2) The soon to be reauthorized Rehabilitation Act should reflect tighter connection to transition planning for young people with disabilities. Usually this is the client's first experience with vocational rehabilitation counselors. These experiences must be positive.

3) Some states have begun to prioritize adult services, supported employment, etc., for transition age youth. More states need to do this. If we have failed or partially failed with older people with disabilities, lets not perpetuate this problem. Limited resources must be targeted to transition age youth.

4) Above all, we need to realize that young people with disabilities are first and foremost young people. They will experience the same adjustment problems as other teenagers.

The whole concept of transition is a dynamic and changing one. Transition is not static. As the name implies, it is a period of change and evolution. We live in a complex world that is complicated by the high number of societal problems, difficulties, and challenges which face everyone on a daily basis. When physical, emotional, intellectual, and/or a learning disability are added into the equation of progressing toward adult adjustment, it is not difficult to see the problems that many of these young people face.

In reality, those of us who work in the field of special education, rehabilitation, and psychology, must directly confront the fact that, in order to help people in the transition process, we must face the problems as a whole in society and particularly in our respective communities. Facing transitions by young people with disabilities cannot be done by the school systems alone. All forces within the community and family must work together. What the school can do is facilitate the coordination and design plans which will increase the likelihood of successful adult adjustment.

In the final analysis, we must not lose sight of why we send students with disabilities to school. These students participate in school for the purpose of learning how to work independently, how to live in a community, and how to develop a quality of life which will insure happiness and satisfaction. We must strive to help young people with disabilities become interdependent. For example, students who are significantly challenged by their disabilities will need to know how to work with other members of the community in solving the daily problems and barriers that they face.

Al Condeluci (1991) has recently introduced the concept of interdependence in a superb book which I am sure will become a classic in the 1990's. Condeluci eloquently makes the point that all of us handicapped or otherwise, are interdependent parts of the community and dependent on others. Educators, counselors and other members of the helping professions must recognize this in their transition planning as well as program implementation strategies.

Professionals, parents, family members and advocates have the responsibility to make the lives of thousands and thousands of young people with disabilities different and better. We must learn to individualize our professional responses to specific needs; we must learn to individualize program plans; we must not become bogged down in bureaucratic processing; and we must focus planning directly on measurable outcomes such as jobs before students leave school. Finally, we must identify curriculum which directly reflects what students need to successfully adjust in society. When we pull together as professionals and family members, first at a local level and then at state level, we will be able to put all of the positive forces to work on behalf of young people with disabilities.

Paul Wehman, Ph.D
Director, RRTC/VCU

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Vocational Options Project

The Vocational Options Project is sponsored by a three-year, federally funded grant awarded to the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Supported Employment at Virginia Commonwealth University by the U.S. Department of Education. The project is designed to provide community-based vocational training and supported employment to students with severe disabilities. In it's second year, the project has placed 25 students into various training experiences from VA Randolph School in Henrico Co. and the Chesterfield Co. School System. Focus of training has been to:

- **Determine the students' job preferences.**
- **Help students develop a work history.**
- **Assist with vocational transition from school to work.**

Currently, the focus has moved from community-based instruction to supported employment. Staff are busy finding jobs for the students based on information gathered during their training experiences. Both the individual placement model and cluster placement models of supported employment are being used to ensure employment success. This newsletter represents some of the information that the project staff have gathered and found useful for program development. In sharing this with our readers, we hope to facilitate employment for other students with severe disabilities.

Labor Laws and Community-Based Instruction

Often teachers operate community-based vocational programs under the assumption that students can work without pay in community businesses as long as the students' IEP's or ITP's reflect training objectives. This is not the case, and school systems need to learn about and adhere to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) when conducting community-based vocational training (Moon & Inge, in press; Moon, Kiernan, & Halloran 1990). The following six criteria must be met when designing and implementing vocational training experiences (United States Department of Labor, 1962).

Know the 6 criteria of a "non-employment relationship"

1. Training is similar to that which would be completed in vocational schools.
2. The training is for the benefit of the students.
3. The students do not displace regular employees and work under coworkers' close supervision.
4. The employer does not benefit from the students' activities, and in fact, the business operations may be impeded.
5. Students are not entitled to a job at the end of the training period.
6. Employer and student understand that the student is not entitled to wages for the training period.

In addition to the six criteria listed, there are other conditions that need to be met. For instance, students often perform jobs within the school building or grounds. There could be a problem with violating labor regulations unless several issues are considered.

First, a student can participate in non-paid work experiences in the school system without adherence to the six DOL criteria if work occurs directly for the school district and **not** for an outside agency (vendor). An example of an outside vendor might be a lawn maintenance crew that is made up of individuals who are not school employees. In this instance, a student could not receive vocational training in lawn maintenance unless all of the six DOL regulations are met. Additionally, training periods within the school district must not exceed an average of one hour per school day.

Understanding the labor law guidelines is a complicated task. School systems should contact both their federal and state Departments of Labor to determine what regulations exist. It is not uncommon for a state to have laws in addition to the federal guidelines. Noncompliance can result in fines to the employer who has provided the community-based training sites.

The case study examples on the following page are offered as a beginning to understanding FLSA. They are clearly an introduction to a detailed topic. The references listed in this newsletter should prove helpful.

Labor Laws: Case Study Examples

1. Mary is 13 years old and is working in the school cafeteria for 30 minutes each day as a part of her vocational program. The school lunch program is staffed by employees hired by the school system. Mary cleans the tables after lunch, and she is not being paid for her work. Does this meet DOL regulations?

   YES **NO**

YES: Mary can participate in this school based vocational activity as long as her work experience averages no more than one hour per day. It is also important to note that this lunch program is staffed by school employees. If this job had been performed by non-school employees, an employment relationship would exist unless all 6 DOL regulations were met for a non-paid work experience. Teachers must make sure that jobs in the school system are completed by school employees and not outside vendors when selecting in-school training activities.

2. Bob is 18 years old with a diagnosis of mental retardation and autism. His teacher placed him in a non-paid training site folding pizza boxes for 1 hour per day. Initially, Bob needed intensive instruction on the task, however now he is independently folding a box every 15 seconds. The store manager suggested that Bob could continue in his training program without the teacher. Does this meet DOL regulations?

   YES **NO**

NO: This situation does not meet DOL guidelines, since the employer is obviously benefiting by having an extra individual to complete the regular work tasks. Once Bob became independent on his work activities, this was no longer a training situation, and DOL guidelines were being violated. In order for him to remain in this position without the teacher, Bob must be hired and paid the standard wage for the job duty.

3. Bobbie is 19 years old and is participating in a school program that supplies supported employment services to transition age students. Her vocational teacher has just landed her a job working 20 hours per week at minimum wage in a local grocery store. She will receive training from an employment specialist. Does this meet DOL regulations?

   YES **NO**

YES: Bobbie is old enough to work up to 40 hours per week. In addition, since she will earn minimum wage, the situation complies with FLSA standards. For younger students, teachers must ensure that certain criteria are met even if payment is received. For instance, students 16-17 can not work at any time in positions declared hazardous by the Secretary of Labor. Students 14-15 can work no more than 3 hours on a school day, with a limit of 18 hours per school week. They may not exceed more than 40 hours in a non-school week nor work before 7 a.m. or after 7 p.m.. The exception to this time is between June 1 and Labor Day, when the youth could work as late as 9 p.m.

4. Sally is 16 years old and is working with her teacher at a local hotel. As part of a non-paid community-based training program, she is learning to empty the dryers and fold towels. The teacher has promised that they will complete the same amount of work as the regular employee. While Sally completes these tasks, the hotel employee will collect laundry from the guest rooms. Does this meet DOL regulations?

   YES **NO**

NO: In this situation, Sally and her teacher are displacing a regular worker who is usually responsible for completing these job duties. Since the employer will benefit by freeing up a staff person to complete additional work, Sally must be paid. It is possible to have this an unpaid training site, if the regular employee continues to perform her job duties while Sally and the teacher work alongside her. In addition, the other remaining 5 DOL regulations must be met.

5. Bill is 18 years old and has a severe physical disability. His teacher knows that he wants a data entry job after graduation from high school. She has a friend who runs an auto parts company where Bill could volunteer his time three days a week doing word processing. The employer says that the teacher does not need to accompany Bill to the job. Does this meet DOL regulations?

   YES **NO**

NO: Individuals who have disabilities should volunteer their time in the same way as their peers without disabilities. In this situation, it is unlikely that an 18 year old would volunteer 6 hours of work without pay, since most data entry positions are not voluntary. In order for Bill to work for the teacher's friend without pay, the 6 DOL regulations must be met. This would include receiving instruction on the job duties selected.

Reference: Moon, M.S., Kiernan, W. & Halloran, W. (1990). School-based vocational programs and labor laws: A 1990 update. The Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 15(3), 177-185.

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Steps in Setting Up Community-Based Training Sites

The foundation of effective vocational transition is the training a student receives during his or her school years. A number of studies have shown that successful employment post graduation is related to whether a student has participated in community-based training during his or her educational years. Many teachers, however, can feel uncomfortable leaving their "safe" classroom environments for the world of work. This may be caused by simply not knowing how to go about setting up training sites for students.

When designing a vocational training program, it is important to analyze the community and identify jobs that are appropriate for students with severe disabilities. Training experiences should provide students with the opportunity to become a part of the work culture and train alongside regular employees. Finally, a training program should be designed that reflects an increase in the number of hours spent in the community as students near graduation. In fact, it is ideal for a student to obtain employment by the end of the school years. The result is a "work resume" that demonstrates inclusion in a variety of jobs within a number of different work settings. The following information is offered as a guide to teachers for setting up community-based training sites. This checklist has proven helpful for the Vocational Options Project.

Steps	Activities
I. Conduct a job market analysis to identify potential jobs in the community that would be appropriate for students with severe disabilities.	1. Survey the telephone yellow pages. 2. Read the classified section of the newspaper. 3. Contact local business organizations i.e. Chamber of Commerce. 4. Survey school graduates to determine jobs held by individuals with disabilities in the community.
II. Identify businesses with the targeted jobs.	1. Establish a school policy for contacting businesses. 2. Identify individual(s) responsible for business contacts. 3. Determine school insurance coverage and liability issues. 4. Develop a list of employers to approach. 5. Schedule a time to write letters, telephone, and visit employers. 6. Compile a file for each business contacted.
III. Contact the Personnel Director or Employer	1. By letter and/or telephone: a. Briefly describe the school's community-based program. b. Identify jobs that may be appropriate for training. c. Schedule a time to visit and explain the program further. 2. Visit in person: a. Describe the purpose of community-based instruction. b. Discuss the employer, teacher, and student responsibilities on the job site. c. Discuss the school's insurance and liability policies. c. Target tasks and time periods for training. f. Schedule a visit to observe the identified tasks to develop job duty and task analyses. g. Send a thank you note.

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Steps in Setting Up Community-Based Training Sites

Steps	Activities
IV. Adhere to Labor Law Regulations	1. Contact state and federal departments of labor. 2. Identify regulations that apply to the school's community-based training program. 3. Develop a community-based training policy to meet the labor law requirements. 4. Discuss the proposed training program with representatives of the state and federal departments of labor. 5. Design a community-based training agreement/contract. 6. Explain the labor law regulations for unpaid work experiences to employers, school personnel, parents, and students. 7. Meet with students, employers, and parents to sign the community-based training contracts.
V. Identify, select, and analyze appropriate jobs.	1. Visit the job site location. 2. Discuss possibilities with the work site supervisor. 3. Identify job site rules and regulations. 4. Discuss the identified jobs with the coworkers. 5. Observe the coworkers performing the job duties. 6. Select the tasks best suited for students with severe disabilities. 7. Develop a job duty schedule and task analyses for the activities selected. 8. Identify work-related activities for training i.e. social skills, break-time behaviors, etc. that are required by the position.
VI. Schedule the community-based training.	1. Confirm training times with the employer or department supervisors. 2. Request 1 to 2 hour blocks of time for each site identified. 3. Develop a system for rotating students through the different training sites. 4. Target students to participate at specific sites. 6. Contact appropriate persons (i.e. students, parents, teachers, speech therapists, occupational/physical therapists, rehabilitation counselors, etc.). 7. Conduct student I.E.P./I.T.P. meetings and add community-based training programs to the Individualized Transition Plan. 7. Assign staff and students to each site. 8. Design job site training programs for identified job tasks, social skills, and work related activities. 9. Identify transportation and develop a transportation schedule. 10. Send a copy of the schedule to the school principal, special education supervisor, parents, employers, and so forth.

NOTE: This table is adapted from Moon & Inge (in press); Moon, Inge, Wehman, Brooke, & Barcus (1990); Pumpian, Shepard, & West (1988).

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Community-Based Training: A Case Study

The presence of challenging behaviors may be one of the most common reasons that teachers hesitate to take students into the community. They may be concerned about liability and safety issues if the student becomes uncontrollable or runs away from instruction. This has been true for a number of students who have been participating in the Vocational Options Project.

One student, Bobby, was 21 years old with a primary diagnosis of severe mental retardation and a secondary diagnosis of autism at the time of his referral. Bobby had a long history of challenging behaviors to include running away, laughing inappropriately, throwing his body on the ground and so forth. Since he was due to graduate from school, it was felt that he should be a project priority.

Initially, Bobby was placed in a training site at a hotel folding laundry and cleaning a small vending machine area. A structured instructional program and reinforcement schedule was developed for him, however within 5 days of placement the employment specialist reported uncontrollable behaviors. These included running from the instructor and laughing, clinging to the employment specialist's arm, and running to the pool area of the motel.

Initially, several behavior management programs were attempted to keep him on site. This included a differential reinforcement of other behaviors strategy using checks and edible reinforcement. However, the behaviors escalated, and team meetings were held to discuss the problem. It was decided that Bobby would be removed from the training site, and the employment specialist was assigned to work with him in the community completing fun, non-work tasks to build a rapport with Bobby. Initially, he was only required to remain with the instructor for brief periods of time i.e. 5-10 minutes. Gradually over the course of six weeks, he began to participate in shopping, going to a restaurant, and using the post office. At the end of the time period, it was decided that Bobby was ready to begin vocational instruction.

The first decision made for instruction was to control the time period that Bobby remained on the training site. It was felt that this should be short to ensure job success. A baseline of performance indicated that Bobby could remain on site for 10 minutes before he began to engage in inappropriate behaviors. A changing criterion design and a reinforcement strategy was implemented. This included setting a timer for 10 minutes. During this time, Bobby earned 1 coin for each item in the bathroom that he cleaned. His money was placed in a container, and he could use it to buy a soda at a fast food restaurant at the end of the training session.

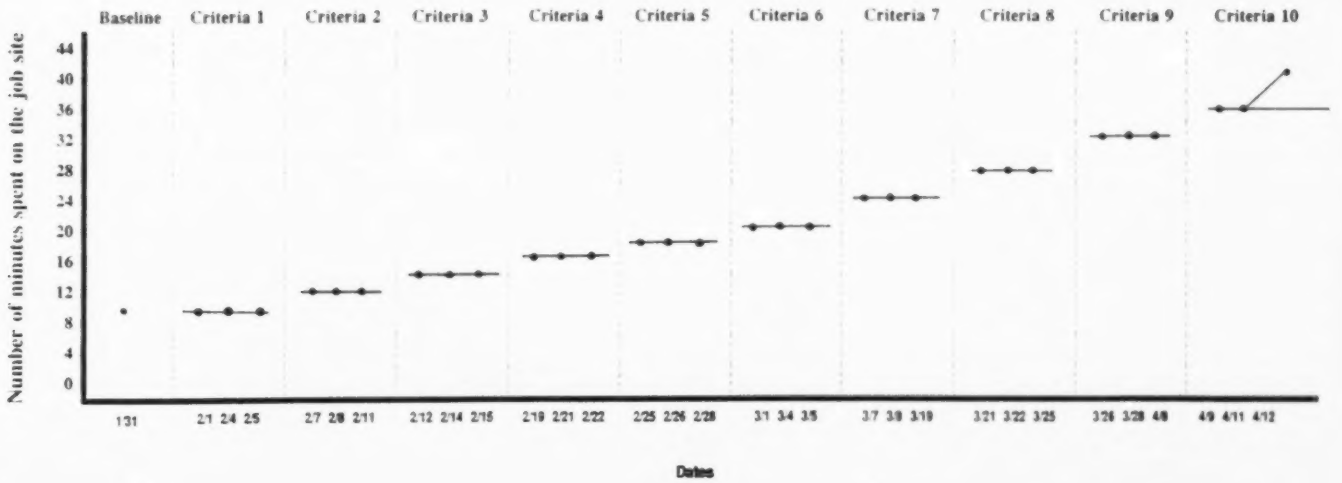
Bobby was allowed to take a one minute "sit down" break to regain his control if he began to display inappropriate behaviors. At the end of one minute, he was prompted to return to work. This procedure when paired with reinforcement was successful in keeping his physical and vocal behaviors under control.

Once Bobby was able to remain on the job site for 10 minutes for 3 consecutive days, his time was increased to 12 minutes. Three successful days at 12 minutes, and the employment specialist increased the time to 14 minutes and so forth. The graph at the bottom of the page shows how time in the community was increased gradually at one training site.

Bobby went on to another training site, and the same strategy was implemented until he was participating in training sessions for 2 hour blocks of time. Anyone interested in learning more about Bobby's program is encouraged to contact the Vocational Options Project. We would be happy to share our experiences with you concerning Bobby and other students like him.

Time On Job Site Using A Changing Criterion Design

Bobby -- Hechingers



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Community-Based Training Reports

One of the reasons for completing community-based training is to determine the training needs and job preferences that students have in order to place them into supported employment. The Vocational Options Project addresses these issues by placing students into a minimum of three different training experiences reflective of jobs that are available in the community. Each placement typically last 6-8 weeks, and a report is completed after the experience. When the student completes at least three training placements, a summary report is developed and sent to interested individuals (e.g. teachers, special education supervisors, administrators, case managers, vocational rehabilitation counselors, parents, and so forth). The following excerpt comes from a composite report for one student who participated in three community-based training experiences.

Summary Community-Based Training Report: Susan Smith

During the past four and one half months, Susan has received community-based vocational training at Hechingers, Howard Johnsons, and Shoneys. She worked at each job site for 2 hours, 4 days a week, over a 6 week period. Each of the training sites involved different job duties and work environments.

Training Site #1: At Hechingers, Susan had several work stations where she put up stock and "fronted" the shelves. This required her to reposition merchandise from the back of a shelf to the front ordering the items in rows. Susan was required to orient to large areas in the store, and had frequent contact with customers. By the end of the training session, she was able to match stock in boxes to the correct location on the shelves, lift stock weighing up to 20 pounds, recognize and set aside damaged items, maneuver a loaded stock cart throughout the store, and respond to customer questions by saying "please ask at the service desk".

Training Site #2: At Howard Johnsons, Susan's job was to clean the restroom (sinks, toilets, sweeping and mopping the floor) and vacuum the motel lobby. This position involved moving between two different work stations in the front of the motel. Susan only learned 30% of the vacuuming task and did not seem to like this job duty. She did reach skill acquisition on the bathroom job in 4 weeks of training, however Susan could not work to production standards. During the last two weeks of the training experience, she worked on learning how to move quickly. Her time to complete the task decreased from 90 minutes to 50 minutes after a reinforcement program was implemented. (The coworker could perform this task in 20 minutes.)

Training Site #3: Susan's position at Shoneys focused on bussing tables and rolling silverware. Rolling silverware was a seated job duty that occurred in a secluded section of the dining room, while busing tables required orienting to the entire restaurant, continuous standing, and interactions with customers and coworkers. Susan learned both tasks by the end of 6 weeks. She was very meticulous and took great care in performing her work, however this hampered her ability to achieve the production speed of her coworkers.

Summary: Susan performed well in both large and small work environments, and was able to remain on task in environments where there were unfamiliar people. She seemed to prefer working in public environments with Shoneys being the worksite of choice. Susan consistently displayed a positive attitude, arriving each day eager to work. Her socialization with customers and coworkers was appropriate and pleasant. By the end of the three training sessions, she was able to respond to yes/no questions accurately and initiate "hello" and "goodbye" with her coworkers. Training sessions were scheduled between 7:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., and she maintained the same enthusiasm and speed across all training times. The system of least intrusive prompts was the most effective instructional strategy used with Susan. She consistently worked at a slow, steady pace for up to an hour before needing to take a break. Susan's physical strength is good, and she was able to carry a 30 to 40 pound bus pan full of dishes from the dining room to the dishroom.

Points to Consider When Seeking Employment:

1. The best instructional strategy for Susan is the system of least prompts.
2. Susan likes to self monitor her work using a picture card and check syste[illegible] She learned to do this independently during the Shoneys placement.
3. She prefers to work in settings where she has frequent contact with coworkers and customers. She appeared especially motivated in the food service setting.
4. Susan is motivated by work and is receptive to instruction from a job trainer.
5. Susan's endurance remained consistent for 1 hour between 7:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m..
6. Physical strength is good, and Susan can carry a 40 pound bucket for short distances (about 15 feet).

Future Training Recommendations:

1. Increase opportunities for Susan to purchase items in the community using a "money card". She is unable to perform tasks such as using a vending machine.
2. Provide opportunities for Susan to perform tasks while standing to increase her endurance for job placement.
3. Establish jobs/errands for Susan to complete which require her to verbally interact with adults. Focus on maintaining eye contact when performing these duties.
4. Provide opportunities for Susan to work toward increasing her speed and production rate on a task.
5. Refer for supported employment placement at the beginning of the school year prior to graduation.

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Virginia Commonwealth University Vocational Options Project and The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Supported Employment

This newsletter was jointly produced by the RRTC and the Vocational Options Project. The mission of this project is to provide community-based training and supported employment placement and training to students with severe disabilities in the Richmond metropolitan area public schools. The Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Supported Employment, funded in 1988 by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, provides research, training, and leadership on supported employment for citizens with developmental and other severe disabilities.

For further information write to VCU-RRTC, VCU Box 2011, Richmond, VA 23284-2011. Specific information regarding this newsletter or the Vocational Options Project should be addressed to Ms. Katherine Inge at this same address. Funding for this publication is provided by the U.S. Department of Education, Grant #H-133B80052-92 and #H158N00051-91.

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